

VZCZCXRO0544

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DE RUEHCH #0953 2681310
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 241310Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7112
INFO RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS CHISINAU 000953

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB AND DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM KDEM MD

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT LEADER LAUNCHES SMEAR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST OPPONENTS

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Accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Facing dwindling poll numbers, Christian Democratic Party (PPCD) leader Iurie Rosca initiated a lurid smear campaign against two opposition parties with which he competes for second place behind the Party of Communists (PCRM). Running a negative smear campaign could cost him votes. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Given falling poll numbers, Rosca's party may not receive a minimum of six percent of votes now required for representation in Parliament in the spring 2009 election. Perhaps to boost support for his party, Rosca recently published two inflammatory magazine-style volumes against other opposition party leaders. The first was launched on August 8 and targeted the head of the newly created National Liberal Party (PLDM). It is titled "Filat, the Gangster of Transition who Robbed the Country," and contains 95 pages of court judgments and reprints from the PPCD newspaper Flux, accusing Filat of corruption during his time as head of the government's Privatization Department (1998-2001). The volume also accuses Filat of using his "dirty money" to corrupt journalists and induce members of other parties to join the PLDM. Volume II, at 96 pages and launched on August 20, attacks Our Moldova Alliance leader Serafim Urechean and his associates under the title "Dinosaurs of the Soviet Regime." Also reprinting court judgments and Flux articles, it accuses Urechean of privatizing buildings for his own benefit during his term as Mayor of Chisinau (1995-2005).

¶3. (SBU) The stodgy photocopies on newsprint used to fill both volumes contrast sharply with their glossy, lurid covers. A photograph of Filat, chewing on his fingernails is surrounded by hairy caterpillars which crawl over his collars and over his head. Urechean's head is photo-edited onto the body of a bare-torsoed crime boss whose chest is covered with tattoos. He is wearing a gold crown, identifiable as archaeological loot to fans of a popular 1970s Soviet crime film.

¶4. (SBU) Rosca has admitted publicly that both volumes were published with the upcoming elections in mind. He also declared his high-minded motive to warn Moldova about the dangers of corruption and organized crime. Going beyond these warnings, he also requested that the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Interior, the Center to

Combat Economic Crimes and Corruption, and the intelligence services investigate the allegations made in both volumes.

15. (SBU) Comment: Politics in Moldova is a full-contact sport. The level of vitriol in Rosca's volumes may indicate a level of desperation on the part of the PPCD and its leader. Rosca, known for years as a firebrand anti-Communist, signed what many of his former supporters regarded as a pact with the Devil in 2005. Just after parliamentary elections that year, he entered into a voting alliance with the PCRM, and became Deputy Speaker of Parliament as part of the bargain. Since then, public support for him and his party has dropped sharply, and the PPCD might not reach the six percent threshold for parliamentary seats in an election held today. Under these circumstances he has turned in desperation to denouncing other party leaders. End comment.

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